

# 'THE LINK'

*St Mark's Crescent Methodist Church  
Maidenhead  
Tel: 01628 631024*



*June/July 2018*

[www.stmarksmaidenhead.org.uk](http://www.stmarksmaidenhead.org.uk)



During these months, the summer is upon us and as the song goes “It’s summertime and the living is easy”. Hopefully it will be easy for you because this is when people tend to relax a bit more; take holidays; spend more time outdoors; and often in our churches and groups there are less meetings etc. What do we do when the daily pressures on us are reduced or our routines change? It’s a bit like having an “off” switch – precious new space is created in our busy lives.

There’s a trend at present to practice “mindfulness” that I understand to be focussing all your senses on being in the present moment. It’s supposed to reduce the stress of what has gone before and what might be the future and is said to enable a more peaceful and caring attitude within oneself. The trouble with such inward focussing is that we tend to switch God off as well. Whether it’s a case of being “mindful”, or enjoying some increased leisure time, or simply having to change our routines, it becomes too easy to focus totally on ourselves and leave God out of the equation.

There’s a story in Luke chapter 10 of two sisters: Martha and Mary. Martha is bustling about preparing a meal for Jesus, totally absorbed in what she is doing and getting cross and complaining that her sister is not helping her. Mary is sitting by Jesus hanging on every word he is saying and Jesus tells Martha that her sister has made the better choice. Why? Because what we all need more than anything else is to pay attention to God through Jesus. God, our Creator, knows us all through and through and yet loves us with an everlasting love – that’s what Jesus came to show us – so to not spend time listening in prayer to God is a foolhardy way of living.

During the summer, when we seem to have more time and space, surely it would be wise to not neglect sharing our lives with God in prayer. May I urge you to keep on praying

wherever you spend the coming months? The benefits for yourself and this world in which we live will be far greater than a suntan!

Perhaps this song by Noel Richards will help you:

*“To be in your presence, to sit at your feet, where your love surrounds me, and makes me complete. This is my desire O Lord.*

*To rest in your presence, not rushing away, to cherish each moment, here I would stay. This is my desire O Lord”*

God bless you,  
Julie

## ST MARK'S GENERAL CHURCH MEETING

The annual GCM took place on Sunday 22 April, chaired by Thames Valley Circuit Superintendent Minister, Rev Sonia Hicks.

Minutes will be circulated later but, for the benefit of those unable to attend, we're publishing this brief summary.

### **Appointments**

Keith Machin (Senior Steward), Sarah Shell, Eileen Chislett and Sara Motion were appointed as Church Stewards and David Ridley and Ian Johnson as Vestry Stewards.

Sue Palmer, David Black, Lucy Guest, Audrey Lelliott and Elizabeth Hogg were appointed as Representatives to Church Council.

There are opportunities for church members to join the team of Pastoral Visitors and those interested should contact Judith Ridley for more information.

Isabel Smith has stepped in admirably as Publicity Officer bringing a fresh look to our event posters and press releases.

A Property Steward is urgently needed to support the exceptional work being done by David & Maureen Farrar and it is possible that a small team could be formed to manage this critical role.

Eileen Chislett is resigning from her role as Church Council Secretary from the end of June 2018 so an opportunity exists for a volunteer to come forward to fill this role.

*(Note: This post is open to any Church member and involves convening Church Council and General Church meetings and taking and circulating the minutes. The Secretary is a member of Church Council and the point of contact for information from the Circuit. Computer-literacy to produce documents and use e-mail is important as most church communications are carried out in this way. It is not an onerous role and, if you'd like to know more, please talk to Eileen Chislett, Julie Underwood or Keith Machin.)*

### **Finance Report**

Ed Filmore presented the report which appeared in the April/May 2018 Link and gave a huge vote of thanks to all members and friends for their support.

### **Church Charity 2017-2018**

Voting took place on the two charities suggested by members (Parkinsons UK & Mission Aviation Fellowship) and Parkinsons UK was chosen unanimously.

### **Property Report**

David Farrar noted a maintenance backlog and a need for a schedule for routine repairs.

### **2020 Vision Building Project**

Ed Filmore reported that builders' tenders were still being considered and, because of that and the need to secure further funding, the start of building has been postponed until 2019.

### **Discussion on Future Vision of the Thames Valley Circuit**

The meeting split into 3 groups to consider questions posed by

a paper circulated by Rev Sonia Hicks. Group responses are summarised briefly below.

1. In June 2008, the Circuit Meeting decided to retain 5 presbyters rather than reduce to 4. Many of the reasons for this were linked around keeping our focus on mission rather than maintenance – simply keeping the ‘show on the road’.

**Q: *Is mission still the focus in your local setting or has maintenance become the default position?***

Response: St Mark’s has a clear 2020 Vision project to support its mission but there is a need to look at the bigger picture and a new vision for the circuit.

2. In September 2012, Deacon Andy Packer joined the Circuit staff. Originally, Andy’s main focus was on the town centre ministry in Slough but, since 2015, he has given additional support to Woodlands Park.

**Q: *What, in your experience, has been distinctive about diaconal ministry, compared to Presbyteral, in this Circuit?***

Response: St Mark’s members have little experience of the diaconal ministry but recognise the need for another Presbyter. We are blessed to have the services of Revs Julie Underwood and Richard Cattley.

In view of the heavy pressure on the remaining 3 Ministers, Communion services could be more evenly distributed across the Circuit.

3. When Rev Gary Homewood became ill the Circuit struggled to operate with 3 presbyters and 1 deacon and, when he decided to curtail his appointment, it became obvious that the situation was untenable and would cause further strain on the remaining staff. The decision was taken to employ a lay worker and Ms. Naomi Sharp joined the team in September 2017 with additional support from a supernumerary Presbyter (Rev. Julie Underwood)

**Q: *What, in your experience, has been distinctive about having a lay worker in this Circuit? How could having additional lay workers be a means of strengthening the witness of the local church? Give reasons for your answer.***

Response: St Mark's members have not had experience of a lay worker but felt the addition of a lay worker might help our work with young families.

4. In January, the Circuit was advised that no presbyter was available for stationing here from September 2018. With the present shortage of presbyters across the UK, filling future vacant appointments will become increasingly difficult. The Circuit Leadership Team has recently begun to discuss this reality and Sonia had already written to the Smaller Churches asking them to give time, thought and prayer to this issue.

**Q: *If we were to continue to have only three Presbyters rather than four, what other forms of ministry would enhance what God is calling you to in your communities? Would it be more diaconate ministry or more employed laity?***

Response: More lay workers would help and should be employed on a longer than 1 year contract. We could encourage more of the morning congregation to come to Messy Church by way of integration and vice versa and perhaps arrange an occasional afternoon service for both congregations.

**Q: *What outreach are you presently engaged in that would suffer if there were less hours of ordained ministry available across the Circuit?***

Response: Messy Church might suffer in respect of the worship element and families enjoy having a minister present. 2020Vision needs a Presbyteral input. Our schools outreach is currently missing. Revs Margaret Dudley and Julie Underwood

give great support to the Thursday lunch club and other outreach activities.

**Q: *Where do you think the Circuit should employ its resources in terms of paid staff?***

Response: Lay staff can help ease the administrative load on Presbyters. Perhaps more part time lay staff is the answer but concern was expressed that it may be too stressful with just 3 presbyters.

**Q: *Looking at the next 5-20 years, how does your church respond to the question posed by the Methodist Conference last year: ‘Do you have a growth plan or an end of life plan?’***

Response: 2020Vision is our growth plan.

At the next Circuit Meeting, Sonia hopes to devote time to a discussion which focuses on mission, resources and strategic planning.

## THAMES VALLEY METHODIST CIRCUIT

Whilst wrapped up in St Mark’s affairs and despite recent joint services with High St, it’s easy to forget that we’re part of a much wider Methodist community.

To inform or remind readers, we’re starting a series of short articles on churches in our Circuit, beginning with an overview of the Thames Valley Circuit itself.

The Circuit is one of 17 Circuits (with over 200 Methodist Churches and over 10,000 members) in the South East District of the Methodist Church. The District covers Kent, East and West Sussex, Surrey, North East Hampshire, East Berkshire, Malta and Gibraltar!

The Circuit is a mixed, diverse, multi-ethnic circuit with 12 churches (13 congregations) set along the Thames Valley corridor comprising three towns:

- Slough with its industrial/commercial community and transient, very diverse population
- Windsor with its tourism and commuters
- Maidenhead with its commerce and commuters
- and smaller "village" commuter communities not greatly separated from nearby towns

The Circuit has a membership of around 760 and pastoral responsibility for over 1300 others.

Rev Sonia Hicks is the Superintendent Minister and, with two other full-time presbyters (Revs Mindy Bell and Margaret Dudley), a part-time supernumerary (Rev Julie Underwood), a deacon (Andy Packer) and a lay worker (Naomi Sharp), make up the Circuit Staff. The presbyters look after the churches and members of the circuit, with the deacon concentrating on outreach in the community. The Lay Worker is in Maidenhead with the High Street Church.

Several other ministers (supernumeraries or ministers not in circuit appointment) also reside in the circuit and, in addition, there are around 30 local preachers and several preachers in training.

The circuit enjoys strong ecumenical links and one of the churches, Colnbrook & Poyle, is a Methodist/URC (United Reformed Church) Local Ecumenical Partnership.

There are many examples of churches working together, including:-

- work among immigrants and refugees
- supporting and providing finance for ecumenical projects
- provision and running of Night Shelters for the homeless during the worst of the winter
- collections for Food Banks
- involvement with Street Angels.



## REV GARY HOMEWOOD

We understand from Gary that the Methodist Church will recommend his retirement on health grounds. We send our prayers and wish him, Vicky and Sarah all the best for the future.

## DATA PROTECTION

I expect you are aware that the laws on data protection have been up-dated to make them appropriate for this digital age. This has been a catalyst for us to carry out a data mapping exercise to confirm what information about you St Mark's Crescent Methodist Church holds, and how it is used and secured.

The church has a database of church members, adherents and others associated with the church such as members of church groups (e.g. Wednesday Fellowship, Messy Church), the Age Concern Lunch & Leisure club and patrons of the monthly Bazaar. Information held consists of name, address, phone number, groups to which you belong, name of your pastoral visitor where applicable and the name of the person who delivers the church magazine (The Link) to you.

You receive a copy of the Link if any members of your household belong to groups such as those above. [Neighbours of the church receive a Link for information, but no details about them are held]. This database is held on a password protected laptop and is available to church officers for administrative purposes, but your personal information will not be passed to any other organisation unless required by law. Extracts are given to group leaders once a year in order to check that the information is up-to-date. You can check what data are held, or withdraw consent for some or all of your details to be held by contacting Anthony Nicholls via the church.

In addition, BSTC Box Office (part of the church) and the church treasurer have email addresses of contacts for the purpose of advertising fund-raising and other church events. These invitations are blind-emailed so that addresses are not visible to other recipients. You will be well aware if they have your email address! The church treasurer also holds information required for processing standing orders and gift-aided donations.

### MAIDENHEAD STREET ANGELS

Street Angel, Donna, has written:-

“Having been patrolling the Streets in our town now for seven years, armed with our lollipops, water, first aid kit and the Holy Spirit, we have been overwhelmed by the support from the Police and local pubs and nightclubs.

This year we have had donations of water and lollipops and one bar is raising money for our running costs.

We feel so blessed by the people we meet who exclaim “You’re the Street Angels, you’re legends,” as they recognise us in our special uniforms. We give soup and sometimes blankets to the homeless too. As a purely Christian group we are unable to accept volunteers from non Christians, even though some people have tried to join us through our Facebook page.

Last week we were unable to send out a team because of illness and we need more volunteers who are willing to give up one night (10.30pm-2.00am) in every 4 or 8 weeks. This is a small sacrifice considering that Jesus died for us, as sinners, and we are witnessing to those who haven’t yet met him or his transforming power.

It’s a wonderful opportunity to meet the young people of our town, hear their life stories and reply with a Christian viewpoint and sometimes to pray with them on the streets. Not everyone is drinking to celebrate, many are drinking because they have issues with their jobs, lifestyles and families. Some feel alone,

abandoned and have never really been loved. It's a privilege to be trusted enough to hear their stories.

Can you help to make a difference? Please contact the administrator Donna on [stangelsm@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:stangelsm@hotmail.co.uk)

## BIRDWOOD NURSERY

OFSTED sprang an unexpected last minute inspection on Sarah Dunn and her team in May and rumour has it that the inspection went very well.

Our congratulations go to the Birdwood team and our best wishes to Sarah's husband, Barry, as he continues to recover from a sudden heart attack and surgery.



## **FUTURE 2020 VISION/CHURCH EVENTS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Cost</b>
15 Jun	7.30pm	<b>“Night Music” with High Voltage and Work in Progress</b>	Church	£10pp
16 Jun	10.00am	<b>Monthly Bazaar</b>	Church	Free
23 Jun	3.00pm	<b>Walking Treasure Hunt with BBQ</b>	Church	£10 Adults £5 U-12's
18 Aug	From 10.30am	<b>Garden Fete</b>	Church Grounds	Details later

Book tickets for Night Music & Treasure Hunt/BBQ from [bstc.boxoffice@gmail.com](mailto:bstc.boxoffice@gmail.com)

## CHURCH MONEY MATTERS

As we reach two-thirds of the way through the fiscal year, Church finances remain healthy and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those organisations (their leaders and members) who use our premises each week. Not only do they provide financial support to the church but they help in many ways to bring a great sense of community spirit to St Mark's.

Since the last Link went to press, I'm delighted to report that further grants amounting to £26,000 have been pledged to the 2020Vision project and our thanks go to the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Beatrice Laing Trust and the Persimmons Homes Community Champions scheme for their recent support.

As a result, and with other donations and fund-raising activities, the fund now effectively stands at £407,000 inclusive of interest free loans.

This is truly a remarkable achievement for a church the size of St Mark's and it gives us increased confidence that, with all your help, we can reach our target and commence building in 2019.

If you are giving, or wish to commit to giving regularly, and are UK taxpayers, please remember that donating under the Gift Aid scheme means that, for every £10 donated, £2.50 can be reclaimed by the church from HMRC at no cost to you.

It's also possible to provide financial support at no cost to you by using the Giving Machine ([www.givingmachine.co.uk](http://www.givingmachine.co.uk)) when making on-line purchases. This scheme has already contributed over £1,200 to the fund.

If you'd like to know more about ways of giving regularly or about Gift Aid, Please contact Ed Filmore (e-mail [chrisfilmore@aol.com](mailto:chrisfilmore@aol.com) or 01628 623263).

Ed Filmore (Treasurer)

## TUESDAY SINGERS

The Tuesday Singers regularly use St. Mark's Crescent Methodist Church for rehearsals on most Tuesday mornings throughout the year and St. Mark's has been very supportive of our choir's activities.

This year the choir has chosen Community First Responders as our charity and we will be raising money to help support the work that these volunteers, who are trained by the Ambulance Service, provide to the community. We have forged a good relationship with Cheryl Matthews who now visits us about once a month to teach elements of first aid to our members. Most recently we were shown how to perform CPR and how to use a defibrillator. The choir has really appreciated this training as it is giving us confidence to deal with an emergency should it arise.

Members of St Mark's Crescent Methodist Church would be welcome to attend these first aid sessions when they take place. If you are interested, please contact Janet Martin on 01628 634124 to find out when Cheryl will next be coming to see us.

Tuesday Singers is a ladies' choir and we meet from 10:00 - 11:45 am. We are always keen to recruit new members. There is no requirement to read music. If you would like to give singing a try, please come along on a Tuesday morning to one of our rehearsals. You will receive a warm welcome.

For more information about The Tuesday Singers, please go to our website, [www.tuesday-singers.org.uk](http://www.tuesday-singers.org.uk), or phone Margaret English on 01494 443464.

## SERVICES FOR JUNE/JULY

Date	10.30am	6.30pm
3 June	Revd Richard Cattley Holy Communion	Circuit Healing Service at Windsor
10	Mr David Ridley	
17	Mr Elijah Kommu	Revd Sonia Hicks Holy Communion
24	Mr Henry Mensah- Brown	
1 July	Revd Margaret Dudley Baptism	<b>*Joint Messy Church with High Street Methodist Church</b>
8	Mr Neville Walton	
15	Mr Azeem Bakhsh	Revd Mindy Bell Holy Communion
22	Morning Worship	
29	Revd Richard Cattley Holy Communion	

**\*St Mark's Crescent and High Street Methodist Church will be holding a joint Summer Picnic and Messy Family Fun Day on Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> July, starting 1.00pm, @ Braywick Park (Hibbert Road Entrance).**

**Bring your own food/drinks/rug chairs.**

**Games and fun for all ages!**

## FLOWER ROTA

3 June	Mrs Sara Motion
10	Mrs Pauline Wheeler
17	Mrs Christine Filmore
24	Mrs Helen Harris
1 July	Mrs Jeanette Fahy
8	Mr & Mrs B Lennox
15	Mr David & Mrs Wendy Esling
22	Mrs Ayo Sobo Keane
29	Mr Gerald Price

## LINK DEADLINE

Please note: THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE LINK will be for Aug/Sept. The deadline will be Noon on Sunday, 15 July. Please hand or e-mail your items to Christine Filmore who would welcome any contributions from readers.

e-mail [chrisfilmore@aol.com](mailto:chrisfilmore@aol.com), or phone 01628 623263

## **SAME OLD, SAME OLD LINK??**

**The LINK is one means of communication between the church and the local community so why not let us have your news, news from your organisation or simply items which you think might interest readers.**

**We'd be delighted to publish them.**



## ST MARK'S CRESCENT METHODIST CHURCH SERVICES AND REGULAR ACTIVITIES



Day	Time	Activity
Sun	9.45-10.15am	Prayer Meeting
	10.30am	Morning Service
	3.45-6pm	Messy Church (See noticeboard for dates)
	6.30pm	Evening Service (usually 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sundays)
Mon	9am -1pm	Birdwood Nursery (with lunch)
	2.30-3.30pm	Maidenhead Highway Townswomen's Guild Keep Fit Group
	5.30-8.30pm	Slimming World
	5-8.30pm	Elite Academy of Dance
	7.30-9pm	ALL-SORTS Drama Group (Fortnightly)
Tue	9am-1pm	Birdwood Nursery (with lunch)
	10am-12 noon	Tuesday Singers
	5.15-6.45pm	Brownie Guides (11 <sup>th</sup> Maidenhead)
	7.30-10pm	Maidenhead Musical Comedy Society rehearsals
Wed	9am-1pm	Birdwood Nursery (with lunch)
	1.30-3.30pm	Pilates Group
	2.30-3.30pm	Wednesday Fellowship (Fortnightly)
	5.30-7pm	Brownie Guides (1 <sup>st</sup> Pinkney's Green)
	7.30-8.45pm	Weightwatchers
	8-9.30pm	Bible Study - Monthly at Audrey Lelliott's
Thur	9am-12noon	Birdwood Nursery
	Morning	Talking Newspaper Association
	10.30-2.30pm	Lunch & Leisure (Age Concern Slough & East Berks)
	2-3pm	Yogatime
	7.30-10pm	Maidenhead Highway Townswomen's Guild (1 <sup>st</sup> Thursdays)
	8-9,30pm	Elite Academy of Dance
Fri	9am-1pm	Birdwood Nursery (with lunch)
	4.15-5.15pm	Hymn Practice
	6.15-7.45pm	Guides (1 <sup>st</sup> Pinkneys Green, Miss Baden-Powell's Own)
Sat	10-11.45am	Bazaar/Coffee Morning (3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday of month)
	Morning	Talking Newspaper Association

N.B. WEA also run a number of weekday adult educational courses at the church, details of which are on church notice boards





# NIGHT MUSIC

**Come and enjoy  
A fabulous summer evening**

**FRIDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 7.30PM**

**St Mark's Crescent Methodist Church  
Allenby Road, Maidenhead, SL6 5BQ**

***Proceeds to 2020 Vision Building Fund  
Building better spaces for the local community***

***THE HIGH VOLTAGE SINGERS*** will be hosting a great night of wonderful entertainment including new music from ABBA and JAMES BOND films!

Teaming up with the ***WORK IN PROGRESS*** barbershop male quartet, there will be lots of excellent entertainment packed into this amazing programme!

**We shall be delighted to see you at the above event.**

*Please remember that, if you do not wish to receive emails regarding 2020 ViSion Fundraising from St Mark's Crescent Methodist Church, email the Box Office to let us know.*



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